

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8978

DEPARTMENT PASS DEFENSE

EXDIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, LE, US
SUBJECT: LEBANESE ARMS REQUEST

1. FUAD BOUTROS WHO IS ALSO MINISTER OF DEFENSE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF US ARMS ASSISTANCE AT A DINNER AT MICHEL KHOURY'S HOUSE IN JOUNIEH DEC 18. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOL WAS NOT READY TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST BUT WOULD BE SHORTLY DRAWING UP LISTS. IN GENERAL HE THOUGHT THE GOL WOULD BE SEEKING TRANSPORT, SMALL ARMS SUCH AS M-16'S, AND COMMUNICATIONS. I RECALLED THAT WE HAD OFFERED TO HELP WHERE WE COULD IN THE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES. I DID POINT OUT THAT MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS EXPENSIVE AND THAT GOL WOULD BE WISE TO ESTABLISH PRIORITY NEEDS BEFORE SUBMITTING LISTS TO US.

2. AFTER BOUTROS HAD LEFT I EXPLAINED TO KHOURY THAT IN GENERAL US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS ALMOST A THING OF THE PAST. CONSEQUENTLY, FMS CREDIT WAS THE MOST LIKELY FORM OF FINANCING WE COULD OFFER. I ALSO EXPLAINED THAT OUR FMS CREDIT AGREEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY WHATEVER LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS THE LAW REQUIRED AND FROM PAST EXPERIENCE SUCH APPROVAL WOULD
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HAVE TO BE OBTAINED FROM LEBANON'S PARLIAMENT. THIS HAD BEEN A PROBLEM IN THE PAST. CONSEQUENTLY, IF THEY WERE OBTAINING SPECIAL EMERGENCY POWERS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, THEY MIGHT WISH TO OBTAIN AUTHORITY FOR THE LEBANESE EXECUTIVE TO INCUR LOANS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO PARLIAMENT. (THIS WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN WHEN PARLIAMENT

CONVENES DEC 23 TO APPROVE GOVERNMENT AND AS PART OF REQUEST SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE POWERS.)

3. WHEN A REQUEST WILL BE RECEIVED IS HARD TO PREDICT. ACCORDING TO BOUTROS AND KHOURY, THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL BE ESTABLISHED FROM SCRATCH. BOUTROS INDICATED THAT THE GOL WOULD NOT RPT NOT REINCORPORATE AS UNITTS EXISTING CONTINGENTS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY SUCH AS THE VANGUARDS, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUALS FROM SUCH UNITS WOULD BE. ACCORDING TO KHOURY, THE GOL IS CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE FOR CREATING THE NEW ARMY: A COMMITTEE WOULD BE FORMED CONSISTING OF LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND CIVILIANS. THE COMMITTEE WOULD ESTABLISH CRITERIA ACCORDING TO WHICH MEMBERS OF THE NEW ARMY AS WELL AS CONDIDATES FOR THE MILITARY ACADEMIES WOULD BE ACCEPTED. THE IMPRESSION WAS THAT THIS WOULD BE DONE ALMOST ON A ONE-BY-ONE BASIS.

4. COMMENT. THE ABOVE IS TO FOREWARN THE DEPARTMENT THAT A LEBANESE ARMS REQUEST, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN DUE COURSE. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT 1230 DECEMBER 27. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE WILL RAISE THE ARMS ISSUE AGAIN OR NOT, BUT IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS ANY POINTS IT WISHES ME TO MAKE IN THIS FIELD, PLEASE SEND INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE THE 27TH.
HOUGHTON

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